

STANFORD UNIVERSITY  
MEDICAL CENTER  
PALO ALTO, CALIFORNIA

MAR 27 1963

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DEPARTMENT OF BIOCHEMISTRY  
School of Medicine

DAvenport 1-1100

March 25, 1963

Dr. Ben Eiseman  
Department of Surgery  
University of Kentucky  
Medical Center  
Lexington, Kentucky

Dear Dr. Eiseman:

Your letter of March 15 to Bob Alway was also directed to me and perhaps even more clearly addressed to me. I assume it was sent in a friendly spirit and I feel I owe you a reply in the same spirit. I also assume your point of view is shared by many eminent surgeons in this country today.

First I think you would agree that when the chairman of any medical school department is selected it should be the responsibility of a group of his peers from other areas of medical science. Such a search group should seek the advice and assistance of outstanding practitioners of the special area in which this man is to be appointed. As you know we have been searching for a chairman of surgery for Stanford for nearly two years and have consulted surgeons throughout the country and abroad for suggestions and guidance. In fact I know of no instance in which a search committee has been as diligent and thorough-going in its canvass of candidates and advisers.

What should guide the choice of a surgeon for Stanford? I believe it is essential but not enough that he maintain excellent levels in current standards of practice and teaching. He should, through the research efforts of his department, advance the standards significantly. We cannot define what this research should be but we can anticipate its quality. In this there is no double standard. Good research is defined the same way in all branches of science.

You seem to feel that there is a twisted emphasis on biochemistry in the Stanford deliberations. It may be true although I sincerely hope

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it isn't. You must recall that the selection of Evarts Graham to head the Washington University Surgery Department was a most unconventional appointment. The dean who had a major share in the choice and who vigorously supported the development of a great department of surgery at Washington University was a biochemist, Philip Shaffer.

I am disappointed that your visit was so brief and there wasn't the opportunity to establish what I am sure are basically similar convictions in the choice of a surgeon for this medical school. You were very kind to take the time and trouble to visit us and help us on this as well as on previous occasions with your good advice. We all deeply appreciate this and I am sincerely sorry for what proved to be an unfortunate misunderstanding.

Sincerely yours,

Arthur Kornberg

AK:es

cc: Dr. Alway  
Dr. Hamburg  
Dr. Lederberg ✓  
Dr. Oberhelman  
Dr. Kaplan  
Dr. Holman